

# Ellis Island Oral Interview

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Education Department  
Ellis Island Immigration Museum  
Statue of Liberty National Monument



**Interviewee: Gertrude (Gudrun) Hildebrandt Moller**

Date of Birth: June 15, 1920

Date of Interview: October 5, 1992

Interviewer: Janet Levine, Ph.D

Immigrated from Germany in 1929 at Age 9

Ellis Island Collection: EI-222

## **MOLLER (Impressions of America):**

Oh, that's a good question. When people, word gets around, you know, in the neighborhood and the children and so forth. And then the kids go home and tell the parents, "Oh so and so is going to AMERICA, you know, the land of plenty." So, I remember, I don't remember whose parent it was, father or mother said, "Oh, I hear you're going to Chicago." And I said "Yes." And he says, "Bang, bang, bang." (she laughs uproariously) And I didn't know what he meant by that and, of course, I found out years later that it because it was during the twenties, Al Capone and all that. (she's laughing) You know, I'm nine years old, I don't know what it's all about. And then somebody else said, "Oh, you're going to, I hear you're going to Chicago." And I said, "Yes" and they said, "Well, you know, when you get to America," he said, "did you know the money grows on trees." And, you know, the first thing I did, I couldn't find many trees in New York when we arrived, but (she laughs) on the train going to Chicago, every tree in sight I checked it out (she's laughing) and there weren't any dollar bills growing on any of those trees.